

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for protocol-independent extension of data services through a broadband packet network packs legacy data streams associated with the data services into containers which are in turn encapsulated in protocol data units (PDUs) that are launched into the broadband packet network. The apparatus optimally supports idle suppression to efficiently utilize packet network resources. If idle indications are not provided by subtending sources, idle patterns may be detected by examining the serial data stream for repeating data patterns. The containers have headers dependent on the data stream type. Thus data is only across the packet network as required, further improving efficiency.